

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC HOUSING SAFETY INITIATIVE

THREE SENTENCED, TWO PLEAD GUILTY

GUILTY PLEAS IN CRIME SPREE INCLUDE

25-YEAR SENTENCES

20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CRACK COCAINE,

16 YEARS FOR ARMED ROBBERIES

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Bradley J. Schlozman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that three Kansas City, Mo., men have been sentenced and a Kansas City man and a Raytown, Mo., man have pleaded guilty in federal court in separate and unrelated cases that resulted from the district's Public Housing Safety Initiative.

* **Morris Mitchell**, 47, of Raytown, and **Ramar D. Brown**, 32, of Kansas City, both pleaded guilty on Thursday to their involvement in a two-month crime spree that involved a series of armed robberies, carjackings and firearms violations and ended in a high speed chase and collision. Under the terms of both plea agreements, the co-defendants agree with the government that they should be sentenced to a term of 25 years in federal prison without parole.

Mitchell and **Brown** admitted that they participated in a conspiracy that involved a series of armed robberies at fast food restaurants, drug stores and other businesses, as

well as carjackings and firearms violations, from November to Dec. 15, 2005. **Mitchell** and **Brown** would steal or carjack a car to use in the robberies. One or both defendants would enter the business, brandishing a firearm, threatening the clerk, and demanding money. In many of the robberies, one defendant would act as a look-out and getaway driver for the other.

Mitchell and **Brown** fled from police in a high-speed car chase on Dec. 13, 2005, in a car they had stolen at gunpoint earlier that day while the owner was fueling the car at a gas station. **Mitchell** pulled a gun and pointed it at the driver, telling her, "I'm taking your car," while **Brown** pulled a passenger out of the car. **Mitchell** and **Brown** used the car to commit seven armed robberies on that day before fleeing from police officers. During that pursuit, **Brown** pulled the vehicle over, jumped out and fled from police on foot. **Mitchell** then moved to the driver's seat and continued to flee from the police in a high-speed car chase. During the car chase, **Mitchell** ran red lights, drove the wrong way into oncoming traffic, ran stop signs, and drove the stolen vehicle off of the roadway. The case ended in Kansas City, Kan., after **Mitchell** drove the stolen vehicle the wrong way down 7th Street and collided with another vehicle, causing serious physical injury to the driver of that vehicle.

On Dec. 15, 2005, **Brown** resisted arrest by Kansas City police officers when the officers contacted him at the Motel 6, located at 6400 E. 87th St. **Brown** pointed an R.G. Industries .38-caliber revolver at the officers as they entered the motel room to arrest him. **Brown** told the officers, "I should have shot you when I had the chance."

Mitchell admitted to his role in 14 robberies, two carjackings, brandishing a firearm during the commission of a crime of violence, and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Brown admitted to his role in 19 robberies, one carjacking, brandishing a firearm during the commission of a crime of violence, and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

* **Michael L. Franklin**, 23, of Kansas City, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan on Wednesday to 20 years in federal prison without parole.

On Aug. 14, 2006, **Franklin** pleaded guilty to being in possession with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine. Independence police officers drove into a Sonic parking lot on Oct. 30, 2005, in an attempt to make contact with **Franklin**, who arrived at the parking lot in a silver 2005 Ford F-250 pick-up truck. One officer pulled up in his vehicle behind **Franklin's** truck and the other officer pulled his vehicle in front of **Franklin's** truck. As the officer behind **Franklin** got out of his vehicle, **Franklin** slammed his truck in reverse and backed into the patrol vehicle at a high rate of speed, causing damage and sliding the patrol car 20 to 30 feet across the parking lot. The police

officer had to jump out of the way to avoid being hit by **Franklin's** pick-up truck. **Franklin** then sped out of the parking lot, leading police officers on a high-speed pursuit that ended at the intersection of Missouri and Gillis in Kansas City.

Franklin exited his vehicle on foot, without stopping the vehicle. His vehicle rolled through the intersection and crashed into a parked vehicle on the side of the road. **Franklin** was arrested following a foot chase of approximately a block and a half. During the foot chase, the police officer saw **Franklin** throw a black bag over a fence into the backyard of a nearby residence. Police officers located the bag, which contained five bags with a total of 105.72 grams of crack cocaine and one bag with 5.31 grams of marijuana.

* **Todge A. Anderson**, 21, of Kansas City, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs on Thursday to 16 years and four months in federal prison without parole.

On March 14, 2006, **Anderson** pleaded guilty to robbing Family Laundry, to brandishing a firearm during the commission of that crime of violence, and to robbing Advanced Cellular and Page Center, 1151 Blue Ridge, Kansas City, on Oct. 10, 2005.

Anderson used a Winchester .22-caliber rifle to commit the robbery of Family Laundry. After **Anderson** ordered everyone to lie on the ground, co-defendant **Lonnie D. Gray**, 22, of Kansas City, and an undicted juvenile approached a customer of the laundry, who was present with her 10- and 13-year-old children, and demanded money from her. **Anderson** pointed the rifle directly at an employee at Family Laundry while ordering everyone to the ground. **Anderson** grabbed approximately \$200 from the cash register drawer, then fled.

Anderson also admitted that he and co-defendant **Marcus J. Hill**, 20, of Kansas City, , and an undicted juvenile robbed Advanced Cellular and Page Center, which is located just blocks from Family Laundry. When the co-owner of the store became suspicious and asked them to leave, **Anderson** pushed her back inside and punched her in the face, demanding to know where the money was. **Anderson** told **Hill** to take the gun out, and **Hill** then pointed a Winchester .22-caliber rifle directly at the woman's face. She told them there was money in the desk; **Anderson** punched her in the face and ordered her to get it. She showed **Anderson** where the money drawer was, and **Anderson** took approximately \$50 from the drawer. **Hill** jumped over the glass display case and began grabbing a large number of miscellaneous cell phones and accessories and putting them in his pockets. The co-owner announced that there was a car pulling into the parking lot, at which time **Hill** struck her in the head with the butt-end of the rifle, and they all fled the business.

Anderson was arrested on Oct. 11, 2005, for a domestic violence assault, after shooting a rifle at his ex-girlfriend. The rifle used in that assault matched the description of the rifle used in the two robberies.

Gray and **Hill** pleaded guilty to their roles in the robberies. **Gray** was sentenced to seven years in federal prison without parole, while **Hill** awaits sentencing. **Hill** also admitted to taking five cell phones from the business, which were taken to the nearby apartment of co-defendant **Prince E. Gilbert**, 20, following the robbery.

* **Gilbert** was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this morning to two years in federal prison without parole. **Gilbert** pleaded guilty being an accessory after the fact to the robbery of Advanced Cellular and Pager Center, by assisting co-defendants **Anderson** and **Hill** to dispose of evidence of the crime. After the robbery, law enforcement officers followed a trail of cell phones in the parking lot and the grass that led to a nearby apartment complex. **Gilbert** admitted that **Anderson** and **Hill** came to his apartment immediately after the robbery and discussed the robbery while they waited, because police cars were in the area. **Gilbert** disposed of the cell phones and accessories in a trash bag that he put in the dumpster next to his apartment.

These cases are being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew P. Wolesky. They were investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The Public Housing Safety Initiative is a partnership that includes the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General.

Public Housing Safety Initiative

The Public Housing Safety Initiative focuses on reducing crime in targeted public housing areas, improving tenant conditions and improving interagency collaboration and communication on quality-of-life issues in public housing areas.

The Public Housing Safety Initiative provides federal funding to train police officers and crime analysts, improve surveillance in public housing areas, increase the number of sweeps conducted in these areas, target criminals residing in public housing areas, increase drug enforcement, improve investigations and coordinate and cooperate with probation and parole efforts. Specifically, a portion of the funding is earmarked for the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Independence, Mo., Police Department. Additionally, the federal initiative funded the hiring of a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney to prosecute crimes occurring within federally-assisted housing areas.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html

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